



*Bildungsroman in Nigel King's " Twiggy in Home from Hell"*

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الرواية التشكيلية لنيجل كنگ توغي في منزل من الجحيم

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## المستخلص

يدرس البحث مصطلح Bildungsroman في قصة Twiggy in Home from Hell للكاتب نجيل كنگ وتكشف الرواية تطور شخصية البطل خلال مراحل طفولته ومراهقته حتى وصوله إلى مرحلة النضج الكامل. ومن خلال القصة يتعرض البطل تويجي الذي يجسد حياة الكاتب كينغ، إلى الاعتداء الجنسي أكثر من مرة على يد القائم على رعايته السيد شوش. ويهدف البحث إلى توضيح كافة العناصر السابقة للرواية التشكيلية المتعلقة بالقصة وتحليل موضوعاتها. أولاً، الرحلة الجسدية التي يجب على تويجي القيام بها للتغلب على الاعتداء الجنسي وفقدان البراءة. ثانياً: الأثر النفسي لاكتشاف هويته. ثالثاً: الصراع الاجتماعي الذي يتعرض له تويجي، واعترافه بالأخطاء، ووصوله إلى مرحلة النضج. أخيراً، في ضوء المصلح، تم إجراء تباين بين الشخصية الرئيسية، بون، في Allison's Bastard Out of Carolina والشخصية الرئيسية، Twiggy، لكنك في Twiggy in Home from Hell، والذي استنتج إلى أن قصة Twiggy تمثل رواية تكوينية، بينما قصة بون لا تمثل رواية تكوينية، والسبب هو أن بون لم تصل إلى اكتشاف هويتها أو لم تصل إلى مرحلة النضج لتعرف هويتها، فقد عزلت نفسها عن مجتمعها، على عكس تويجي الذي يتطور أخلاقياً ونفسياً وفقاً لبيئته الاجتماعية التي ينتمي إليها ولا يتبنى هوية غير الرجولة.

الكلمات المفتاحية : رواية التكوينية، الاعتداء الجنسي، النضوج، الهوية

## Abstract

*The research studies the term Bildungsroman in the story Twiggy in Home from Hell by Nigel King. The novel explores the development of the hero's personality during the stages of his childhood and adolescence until he reaches full maturity. Through the story, the hero Twiggy, who embodies the life of the writer King, is exposed to sexual abuse more than once by his caretaker, Mr. Shush.*

*The research aims to clarify all the previous elements of the bildungsroman that relate to the story and analyze its themes. Firstly, the physical journey that Twiggy must take to overcome sexual assault and loss of innocence. Secondly, the psychological impact of discovering his identity. Third: The social conflict that Twiggy is exposed to, his admission of mistakes, and his arrival at maturity. Finally, in light of the reformer, a contrast was made between the main character, Bone, for Allison's novel, Bastard Out of Carolina, and the main character, Twiggy, for King's novel, Twiggy in Home from Hell. It was concluded that Twiggy's story represents a bildungsroman, while Bone's story does not represent a bildungsroman, and the reason is that Bone does not arrive at discovering her identity or does not arrive to maturity to know her identity. She isolated herself from her society, unlike Twiggy, who Develops morally and psychologically according to his social environment to which he belongs and does not adopt an identity other than masculinity*

*Key words: bildungsroman, sexual abuse, maturity, identity y.*

## **Introduction**

The term "bildungsroman" refers to formation-novels (in the broadest sense), many of the best examples of which come from Germany. Although Wieland's *Agathon* (1765–1766) is typically regarded as the genre's pioneer, Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795–1766), which Carlyle's translation of in 1824 helped popularize in England, is generally considered to be the best and most influential example of the genre. Due to the popularity of *Wilhelm Meister* and Carlyle's semi-fictional *Sartor Resartus* (1833–1844) throughout the 19th century, the German expression *Bildungsroman* has been used in English criticism. (Drabble, 2000, p.100).

A *bildungsroman* is a work of literature that examines the protagonist's morality as well as psychological development. It is a German expression that translates as "novel of formation" or "novel of education." According to Engel, the phrase was originally used to describe a novel about the development of a character's unique personality and facing conflicts with society. However, in more recent years, it has been applied to a wide range of works. Additionally, he notes that it was a subset of the "novel of development" (*Entwicklungsroman*), known as the "novel of education" (Engel, 2008, p. 263-266).

The research studies the main character in "Twiggy in Home from Hell" to center on his transformation from a young boy to adulthood, reaching maturity. It aims to apply the literary genre of *bildungsroman* to the most important incidents in the protagonist's life through his biography. In a *Bildungsroman*, the protagonist experiences emotional loss in the first place; he then embarks on a physical or metaphorical journey to discover the answer to a big question and acquire experience in life which will aid him in better comprehending the world; third, he faces conflicts as well as

experiences personal development; and, lastly, by the end of the story, he exhibits substantial psychological growth and change. That is to say, self-realization is the story's goal.

According to all the preceding elements of the Bildungsroman that relate to the incidents, other themes should be clarified. For example, the physical journey that the hero must make to overcome struggles and a loss of innocence, as well as the psychological or spiritual journey to discover his identity side by side with the social conflict. Finally, in the light of bildungsroman, an example is given of the main character of Allison's story, *Bastard Out of Carolina*, to compare with King's main character.

### **Twiggy's loss of emotion and innocence at childhood stage**

Due to Twiggy has been abused and exposed to violence by his stepfather, he is out of control at school, confused, and shy. His stepfather had cruelly mistreated him, torturing him physically and mentally while he remained silent. That was awful enough for any little boy to experience, but for Twiggy, things were about to grow far worse. Bentovim et al assert that maltreatment affects an individual's behavior to be depressed, withdrawn, or isolated (Bentovim et al, 2009, p :16). At the age of eleven, he has been brought to the home of independent boy where is placed in North Wales, UK. Since "Twiggy in Home from Hell" is a story set in Britain, North Wales, it is important to shed light on British society and the reasons behind the moral decay. Many Inquiries are going to be answered on the reasons for homosexuality's spread, and the turning point of British society from church authority to gay society. It is widely believed that morality is declining in Britain, as confirmed by ComRes Found's 2007 poll conducted for the BBC (BBC News, 2007), which found that 83% of respondents agreed that morality was declining in Britain and only 9% disagreed. Moreover, 78% of youth aged between 16 and 24 years

old have been agreed with the statement: "Britain is experiencing a moral decline". According to Wallwork, the cause of moral decline is the lack of religion. Here, religion is important both as a source of moral principles and as a tool for social control that keeps civilizations organized and stable. (Wallwork, 1985: 206). However, Browne states that different causes affected ethical decline. For example, a decline in social capital (Browne, 2008:7). In "The Great Disruption", in 1995, Francis Fukuyama, defines social capital as the unofficial standards or principles that members of a group agree upon and use to enable cooperation. Accordingly, the decline in social capital leads to family breakdown (Fukuyama, 1999). On the other hand, it has come to light that the church is tolerant. In other words, The England church decriminalized private homosexual acts between two males over twenty-one in England and Wales in the 1967 Sexual Offences Act. (Ramsay,2018: 109).

In this setting, he was one of the several young boys who were victims of the most heinous forms of sexual abuse, which were committed by the founder and principal of the home, who was later imprisoned for his crimes. He metaphorically refers to it as a nightmare because he is abused many times by Mr. Shush. The story is a kind of biography that reflects the writer's life, herein Nigel King. He used the first narrative technique, and onomatopoeia which is an effective way to include the sense of sound. For example, "shush" expresses a demand for silence. In other words, King named one of the character, Mr. Shush, to show the abuse is soundless, when he quietly comes to his victims, he gently whispers "shush" with his finger over his mouth (king, 2008, p:19). Also simile is used, for instance: "frozen like statue" (ibid, p:8) shows the abusive act by Mr. shush who makes little boys motionless as statue. However, Twiggy finds out that he is

placed into care according to his mother's request. This is the first catastrophe in Twiggy's life. According to the different harms that twiggy faced, he lost his emotion and innocent. Butchart et al's definition of child ill-treatment is every sorts of physical and/or emotional maltreatment, sexual abuse, carelessness or neglectful treatment or commercial or other mistreatment, resulting in real or probable harm to the children's health, survival, growth or self-respect in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power" (Butchart, et al, 2006: 9). His mother's abandonment and his separation from his young brother, Ray, have a bad effect on him.

"My mother had rescued us both from the violence of my stepfather but her new life with her mother, and the separation from my little brother Ray, was too much for me to cope with. My mother had also suffered at her husband's violent hands and she was trying hard to rebuild her life. My parents had failed at both marriage and child-rearing, but I was the one who paid the price for their failure. I was given an unjust sentence without trial and taken away. This damaged me for life" (King, 2008: 11). Accordingly, Twiggy suffers from his mother's neglect, his stepfather's violence, and sexual abuse by Mr. Shush.

### **Twiggy's personal and psychological developments at adulthood stage**

Bildungsroman embodies through Twiggy's changing of appearance side by side the psychological and moral development. The story goes on to discuss Twiggy's subsequent sex addiction, and how his life was already dysfunctional when he left the home from hell as a young man. It describes his addiction to drugs and violence as well as his obsessive pursuit of fortune and a sense of self. After two years under Mr. Shush's care, Twiggy has

developed various personas. For example, he has a varied hairstyle and has placed tattoos on his arms. He is very skinny and seemingly very aggressive to everyone. Psychologically, he hates, disgusts, and despises his mother, furthermore, he calls her a "fucking bitch". On the other hand, he gains the ability to mistreat others in the same manner he is treated, he began to imitate his angry, violent arrogant step-father. According to the Social Learning Theory, morality develops via imitation and practice (Ardi, 2018, p. 46). He became a brutal person, for instance, one night he beat a lad, he simply continued to kick and hit him in the face till his blood, teeth, and tears have been on the sidewalk. Twiggy is both pleased and frightened of his newfound power. He has a feeling of exclusion by anyone in authority. According to scholars Lesia M. Ruglass and Kathleen Kendall-Tackett, Severe stressors that have a bad effect on a person's emotional or physical health can cause psychological trauma (Catherall, 2011, p. 61-76). The Home from Hell was a "cesspit of sexual deviancy". The author makes an analogy between the place he lives and kids' factory that is taken to destroy children (king, 2008, p. 20) Twiggy had become someone capable of surviving by reflecting on what was around him. Abused persons with same-sex predispositions may be more likely to adopt another stigmatized identity since mistreatment can lead to a victim's loss of self-worth and the creation of defamed identities. (Saewyc et al.: 2017, p. 115). He was learning to be chameleon-like. He turned aggressive toward everybody around him since it was a violent milieu. He turned into a fantasist and exaggerator who was terrified of men, infatuated with sex, and completely untrusting of anyone. (king, 2008, p.20). His real identity was rapidly disappearing, and he changed into a person who would always be associated with the stigma of having been in care. Traumas is capable to affect

children's well-being and growing (Ruglass et al, 2014, p. 4-5). However, psychological trauma develops after exposure to a single event or a series of related experiences that get worse over time leading to depression, worry, rage, and conflict (ibid).

Although sexual abuse being a part of Twiggy's life but he knew it was wrong and shame. He struggled with the feeling of guilt. King uses simile to describe the place similar to a "kid factory" that accepted defective kids (king, 2008, p. 20).

Twiggy was freed from Mr. Shush at the age of fifteen, but he still suffered from an undiagnosed mental and emotional disorders. He was a broken youngster who struggled with a great deal of uncertainty about his sexual orientation, himself, and life in general. He was paranoid that people would think of him as homosexual. In order to change their opinion, he was involved in sexual activity with girls. A bildungsroman, on the other hand, is a particular kind of coming-of-age tale. The main character develops into adulthood mentally as well as physically from being a lost child. As a result, the character changes from a caterpillar to a butterfly and forfeits his youthful purity. Twiggy felt in love with his wife, Jane, he has undergone significant psychological development, transformation, and maturation at the end. In other words, the boy matures into a man after enduring failed business ventures, strained interpersonal connections, and even cult membership. He eventually discovers genuine love and inner peace with 'Jane,' after overcoming his battle with bi-polar disease via sheer willpower and restored self-worth. This narrative provides an extraordinary window for the reader into the amazing life of an abuse survivor and is at once heartbreakingly tragic and heartwarmingly motivating (Mahd, 2014, p. 6-7)



Jeffers differently classified the concept of "Bildung" among Germans, Englishmen, and Americans. (Jeffers, ch,2, 2016 p: 1). For example: according to Germans, individual cultivation is more important than the national culture. Additionally, Englishmen placed a strong emphasis on the idea that a person's growth as an individual depended on their relationships with the family, friends, acquaintances, and strangers that made up their social environment as well as their inner life's richness. While Americans focus attention is in between Germans' and Englishmen's concepts (ibid.) In the light of Jeffers's classification, King's Twiggy is affected by the English society especially in concern of his identity. Bildungsroman and coming-of-age novels are occasionally synonymous in literary criticism, while the former is typically a broader genre. The "coming-of-age" genre centers on the protagonist's moral and psychological development from childhood to adulthood, emphasizing the significance of character transformation (ibid). The term "bildung" refers to processes that are critical, creative, and transformative that alter how one views the world and how one interacts with it in association with a shifting societal as well as material milieu (Bauer 2003, p 212.) In other words, Education entails both independent self-formation and thoughtful, accountable behavior within and in relation to society. Similarly, his first two years at the Homecare, he has learned to survive by reflecting his surroundings, twiggy resamples his place "a hostile environment", so he became hostile towards those around him. (Hassan, 2019, p. 14) This place is 'living' falsehood" (King, 2008, p 19). Despite sexual abuse is part of his life he knows it is wrong (ibid, p 21) because, in the 20th century, British society despises sexual abuse of children. Another key fact to remember is that large number of boys who were in The Home from Hell have committed suicide. (ibid, p 23). In the

paper titled "Bildungsroman and Trauma in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* and Dorothy Allison's *Bastard Out of Carolina*", Bernadette D'Auria compared *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Bastard Out of Carolina* using the term *bildungsroman*. She came to the conclusion that Lee never explored the long-term consequences of Scout's trauma and the trauma she witnessed. Instead, scenes are presented to the audience where an older Scout is still confused about what happened in Maycomb all those years ago. In contrast, Allison's protagonist Bone experiences multiple traumatic events throughout her childhood. The main focus of the book is her trauma, and the narrative relies on it to advance the plot (D'Auria, 2022, p:10). Likewise, Twiggy has multiple traumatic events throughout his childhood. It can be found that Twiggy is more like Bone for both are abused by their father in law, both have a negligent mother. Twiggy, however, is transferred to a home for independent boys where the owner, Mr. Shush, repeatedly abused him, while Bone never transferred to a care institution. Twiggy is mistreated by a homosexual abuser, while Bone is mistreated by a heterosexual abuser. That means the homosexual abuser has a different effect than the heterosexual abuser upon a child's gender identity. Although, the distinction is between a male text (male author, male protagonist) and a female text (female author, female protagonist), but it seems that " *bildungsroman*" does not fit into Dorothy Allison's *Bastard Out of Carolina*. The first reason is that Bone does not get maturity. In other words, the feminine experience does not fit in the theoretical framework of the genre, (Buckley, 1974; Moretti p: 43-59.) Besides, the English *Bildungsroman*'s protagonist is unquestionably a member of his social environment, and he is also a part of it. His identity is inextricably shaped by his intersubjectivity—his existence with, for, and through other people. The matter of his obligation to them

is not avoided." (Jeffers, 2016, p:36) unlike Bone who decided to change her identity to behave as a boy at the end, accordingly, she is not a part of her social milieu. Therefore, she decides to dwell on the outside of the town, symbolizing her general outsider position and the moral maturity which is one of the principle subjects of bildungsroman is not fulfilled. Conversely, Twiggy in Home from Hell reflects bildungsroman genre for the hero develops morally and psychologically with in social milieu. (Khairunnisa et al, 2019, p: 14-15)

## **Conclusion**

The literary genre of Bildungsroman is discussed in relation to King's tale. It is a German word which means "formation-novel. It is a novel that explains the protagonist's growth from childhood to maturity. The story is the narration of Nigel King's biography in which the main character, Twiggy, struggles against sexual abuse with feeling of shame and guilt. He faces different kinds of psychological and physical suffering. Despite that he leaned to survive and reach the maturity. In contrast to Allison's Bone, who isolates herself from society as a result of changing her sexual inclination, Twiggy experiences significant psychological growth, change, and maturity by the end of the story. He maintains his natural sexual orientation and refuses to be gay despite being exposed to homosexual abuse. In other words, Twiggy's life with, for, and through other people is an irreplaceable part of who he is. He finally ends the social conflict by establishing a new life with Jane, his wife. The goal of reaching adulthood and overcoming psychological trauma has been accomplished.

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